

A NESTING RECORD FOR *COERANOSCINCUS RETICULATUS* (GÜNTHER). *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum* 32(1): 60. 1992:- On 5 March, 1992, a *Coeranoscincus reticulatus* nest containing 8 eggs was found in moist soil beneath a rotten rainforest log in the Mistake Mountains, SEQ (27°58'S, 152°22'E). The log measured 107×20cm (length×width) and was in broad contact with the ground surface and situated in full sunlight (12.25pm). The eggs, just visible below the ground surface, were buried in loose soil in a 2.5cm deep depression. The substrate consisted of a soft, loamy, basaltic soil with a pH of 6.37. Surface air temperature was 27.6°C and the soil temperature within the nest was a cooler 20.0°C.

The eggs varied in length from 23.71-28.94mm (mean 27.22mm) and width from 14.0-18.55mm (mean 16.59mm). The size of the eggs seemed surprisingly large for a species with a maximum snout-vent length (SVL) of 195mm. Only one egg was accurately weighed. It measured 26.05×16.88mm and weighed 3.85gm. Six of the eggs were regular, oval shaped; one was slightly irregular oval; and one was distinctly bean shaped. Seven of the eggs appeared to be

predominantly cream with black crossbands; the back and tail had an obscure, chequered effect of cream, black and brown; the pale venter scales were strongly marked with black edges producing a series of dark longitudinal lines running along the flanks, belly and under-surface of the tail.

Greer & Cogger (1985) examined shell thickness of oviducal eggs in *C. reticulatus* and suggested the species was oviparous. Our record confirms their hypothesis and the *C. reticulatus* eggs from Mistake Mountains represent the first nesting record for the species.

However, it is not possible to determine whether or not the 8 eggs found were a single clutch. From preserved museum specimens of *C. reticulatus*, McDonald (1977) recorded 3-6 oviducal eggs (N=4) in the months October-December. Thus, 8 eggs might be a single clutch but it is also possible that the nesting site was shared by more than one female. Communal nesting is well known in scincid lizards and is summarised by Greer (1989).

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FIG. 1. *Coeranoscincus reticulatus* egg (QM J54649) and hatchling (QM J54647).

healthy; the eighth egg had a small patch of fungus on the shell.

Four eggs were carefully removed from the nest and returned to the laboratory for incubation in vermiculite. Two of these developed fungus and were preserved in 10% formalin (registered as Queensland Museum (QM) J54649 (Fig. 1) and 54650). When opened QM J54650 contained a well-developed, cream coloured embryo (SVL 39.2mm, total length 71.52mm) with conspicuous dark crossbands on the anterior half of the body.

The two eggs left incubating hatched on 2 April, 1992 (QM J54647) and 5 April, 1992 (QM J54648). Hatchling QM J54647 (Fig. 1) (SVL 59.86mm, total length 113.34mm) emerged from an egg measuring 28.07×18.55mm. Hatchling QM J54648 (SVL 58.24mm, total length 111.98mm) emerged from an egg measuring 26.05×16.88mm. Both hatchlings were similarly patterned: the head and neck regions were

Literature Cited

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